

Key

WORKFORCE ISSUES

Representatives from nine southern states meet
in Kentucky to address the region's economic needs

Story inside

Bimonthly publication of the Cabinet for Workforce Development

Tax credits for employers

Employers: Looking for a tax break? The Cabinet for Workforce Development may be able to help.

The cabinet administers two programs that provide employers tax credits for hiring people from certain groups — the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit. A third tax credit program is for employers who give employees time to study for their GEDs.



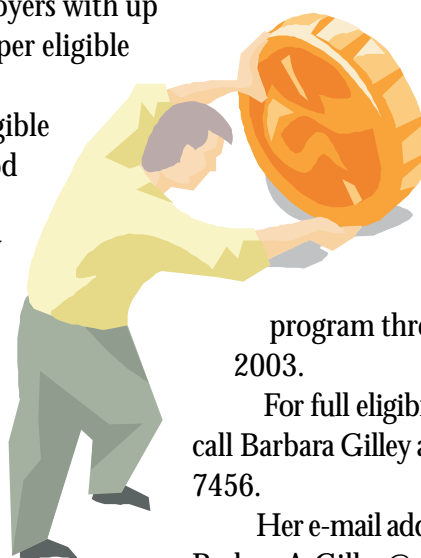
Work Opportunity Tax Credit

This program was recently extended by the federal government through Dec. 31, 2003.

It provides employers with up to a \$2,400 tax credit per eligible hire.

Among those eligible are certain welfare, food stamp and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients; youth who live in areas designated as federal empowerment zones and enterprise communities; ex-felons; and people with disabilities.

For full eligibility information, call Barbara Gilley at (502) 564-7456 or e-mail her at BarbaraA.Gilley@mail.state.ky.us.



Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit

This program provides employers with a maximum \$8,500 tax credit per eligible hire

for people who are long-term welfare recipients. The federal government also recently

extended this program through Dec. 31, 2003.

For full eligibility information, call Barbara Gilley at (502) 564-7456.

Her e-mail address is BarbaraA.Gilley@mail.state.ky.us.

GED Tax Credit

Employers can earn a tax credit of up to \$1,250 by allowing employees a minimum of five hours per week paid release time to study for the GED test.

When the employee earns a GED, he or she is eligible for a tuition discount at Kentucky public postsecondary institutions.

The employer files for the tax credit in the year the employee completes the program.

For full eligibility information, contact Dr. B.J. Helton at (502) 564-5114, ext. 153.

Her e-mail address is BrendaJ.Helton@mail.state.ky.us.



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Farm family expos focus on diversity

Farm families from 17 counties were invited to attend one-day expos with workshops and exhibits geared toward helping farmers with the economic transitions they may face.

Two Farm Family Education Expos were held in late March, one at the Blue Licks Battlefield State Park and the other at the Metcalfe County Enrichment Center.

Nearly 150 people attended the two expos.

Workforce Development Secretary Allen D. Rose, who attended both events, said this was an idea whose time had come.

"Opportunities in tobacco farming are decreasing," Rose said. "Government needs to make every effort possible to help people who have made a living this way, find other ways to make a livelihood."

"These expos were designed to inform and explore opportunities and services that can help farm families diversify, help them upgrade the level of their skills and equip them with essential tools to compete in today's global economy."

Workshop topics included financial management, labor management/migrant labor, home-based business, diversified agriculture, marketing, job search and tips for finding the right job.

An expo for northeastern Kentucky is being planned tentatively for later in the year.

The Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy, the Cabinet for Workforce Development and the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Services hosted the expos.

Strengthening the Southern Workforce

Kentucky hosts representatives from nine southern states whose mission it is to bolster the South's workforce

by Janet Williams Hoover, Communications Director

The South's spotlight was on workforce development issues in Kentucky earlier this spring when the Council for the New Economy Workforce (CNEW) met in Louisville.

Representatives from nine Southern states heard about Kentucky's leadership in adult and technical education and postsecondary education reform.

CNEW is a standing council of the Southern Growth Policies Board and has an ongoing responsibility for finding new ways to strengthen the Southern workforce. Cabinet for Workforce Development Secretary Allen D. Rose is a council member.

Education reform was critical

Speaking at the meeting, Kenneth Oilschlager, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce executive director and CEO, said, "There's absolutely no logical reason not to have the best education and workforce system you can have, and that's what we're building in Kentucky."

Oilschlager cited Governor Paul E. Patton's accomplishments in reforming postsecondary education as critical to Kentucky's economic and workforce development.

"The business community always thought higher education should be reformed, but we never thought we'd see someone with the courage to do it. Governor Patton had that courage. His legacy will be higher education reform."

Innovations and flexibility

Oilschlager, who also is chair of the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, said the Cabinet for Workforce Development is another vital element in the success of Kentucky's economic and workforce development.

"There's ... no logical reason not to have the best education and workforce system you can have." — Ken Oilschlager, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce CEO and executive director

"Kentucky is fortunate to have people like Allen Rose and his staff who are innovative and willing to take chances and do things differently," he said.

Secretary Rose told the council that innovations and flexibility are two top priorities. "We have to listen to customers and respond to their needs," he said. "We're doing that. We have accomplishments that speak for themselves."

Secretary Rose cited recent accomplishments by the Cabinet for Workforce Development:

► Last fiscal year, adult education had a record enrollment of 63,000 Kentuckians, a 23 percent increase from the previous year.

► The number of Kentuckians earning GEDs has increased 41 percent in the past five years. A total of 14,000 Kentuckians earned GEDs last fiscal year.

► The Department for Technical Education increased enrollment from 18,000 to 24,000 students in technical schools for high school students.



Cabinet for Workforce Development Secretary Allen D. Rose shares information on innovations in Kentucky's adult and technical education systems with representatives from nine Southern states.



Sylvia Elam of the Georgia Department of Labor discusses initiatives from her state. Listening is Robert Parsons of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development.

**Southern Growth Conference
June 9-11**

Hilton Head, S.C.

More information at:

www.southern.org/conference.asp

➔ The Department for Technical Education and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System have entered into a landmark agreement to allow students to earn college credit for work done in high school, thereby giving them a head start on college.

➔ The Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department for the Blind are ranked fifth in the nation in the services they provide.

➔ The Department for Employment Services placed 70,000 Kentuckians in jobs last year.

➔ The Department for Training and ReEmployment led the way for the early implementation of the Workforce Investment Act in Kentucky and helped make Kentucky a leader in this area.

Tech centers use skill standards

Emil Jezik, commissioner of the Department for Technical

Education, gave the council an overview of the Kentucky Manufacturing Skill Standards.

“These standards will be successful because business and industry drove the process,” Jezik said. “It was a collaborative effort that included the governor’s office, state agencies and business and industry. But business and industry led the way.”



“These standards will be successful because business and industry drove the process.” — Emil Jezik (above), Department for Technical Education commissioner, discussing development of the Kentucky Manufacturing Skills Standards

Skill standards tell employers that a person who has passed the assessment “possesses the skills that employers need. They have the core components to be successful in manufacturing,” he said.

Jezik said that the 54 Kentucky Tech schools for high school students have incorporated the standards into their

curricula. The Kentucky Department of Education and KCTCS have also adopted the standards.

“This process put Kentucky on the cutting edge in the area of skill standards,” he said.



Dr. A.R. Sullivan, president and CEO of Sullivan University, gives participants a campus tour. Ann Stokes (middle), chair of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and Edie West, executive director of the National Skill Standards Board in Washington D.C., look at campus construction. The CNEW meeting took place at Sullivan University in Louisville.

Future of the South

Council members also provided input on the Southern Growth Policies Board 30th annual conference on the Future of the South.

This year’s conference, scheduled for June 9-11 in Hilton

Head, S.C., focuses on workforce strategies for the changing Southern economy.

More information about the conference is available at www.southern.org/conference.asp.



Charles Meadows of Ernst and Young in Atlanta contributes information on economic development while Kentucky Workforce Development Secretary Allen D. Rose (left) takes notes.



“Kentucky’s Key to Employment”

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The Kentucky Employer Council offers ideas and feedback to the state agency that provides employment services so everyone is

On the same page



**by Kim Saylor Brannock,
Staff Writer**

Knowing what your customer wants and then meeting those expectations can make or break a business. So how do you find out what the customer wants? Ask.

That's the idea behind the Kentucky Employer Council, a 26-member group of business people who advise the Kentucky Department for Employment Services (DES) on the needs of Kentucky employers.

Council Chairperson Jim Wright, the director of Human Resources at Hinkle Contracting Corp. in Paris, Ky., says the partnership can be a valuable conduit for information between DES and industries.

"We try to give them (DES) sound ideas on how they can help us do our jobs better and we can help them provide services," Wright said. "They do a real good job. They're always looking to improve, seeking new ideas and trying different ways to make things better."

Wright said employers should get involved with the council because unemployment insurance

taxes from employers pay for DES services. "It saves money in the long run if DES runs well but they need our input to do that. We are trying to open the lines of communications between employers and DES to improve Kentucky's workforce."

DES Commissioner James Thompson says the partnership between the council and the agency is important for both groups. "The council is an excellent representation of the industries in our state and it gives us better insight into employer needs and feedback on our services."

Council members are from various segments of the business

community that include banking electric companies, manufacturers, construction, universities and health care companies from across the state.

One of the top goals of the council is to develop partnerships with educators to influence the curriculum to produce a skilled

workforce to meet the needs of Kentucky employers. Wright said that educators have been more open to working with business people to prepare students for the workplace.

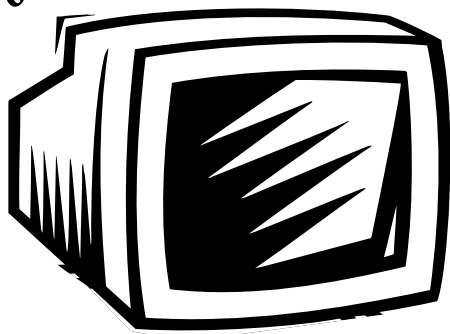
"By giving educators feedback on what businesses need in workers, we hope to get employees who are better equipped to enter the workforce," Wright said. 🔑

"The council is an excellent representation of the industries in our state, and it gives us ... feedback on our services." — James Thompson, Department for Employment Services commissioner

If you're an employer and want to become involved with the council, contact Jim Wright with issues, problems and suggestions concerning DES services at (859) 987-3670 or by e-mail at Jim.Wright@hinklecontracting.com.

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